The Status of the Claims

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for segmenting a population, comprising:

defining a base level population segmentation tree associated with a base level data set at a first top level node having a base precision with a base segmentation tree defining module;

defining a set of alternative level variables with an alternative level variable defining module, the set of alternative level variables associated with an alternative level data set at a second top level node having an alternative precision different than the base level data set and useable as substitutes in ~~the~~ subsequent nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision;

determining, with a substitute split value determining module, substitute split values for each subsequent node of the substitute level tree based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternative level data set at the second top level node to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split value determining module to calculate the substitute split values that maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base level population segmentation tree and;

outputting the substitute level tree having the substitute split values to a user.

2.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

3.   (Original) A method according to claim 2, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

4.   (Original) A method according to claim 2, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

5.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

6.   (Canceled)

7.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the split values are for income and age.

8.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, further including verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

9.   (Currently Amended) A system for segmenting a population, comprising:

means for defining a base level population segmentation tree having a base level data set at a first top level node with a base precision, the base level population segmentation tree comprising a percentage split value in each subsequent node;

means for defining a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternate level data set at a second top level node having an alternate precision different than the base level data set and useable as substitutes in the subsequent nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision; and

means for determining substitute split values for each subsequent node of the substitute level tree based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternative level data set at the second top level node to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split values calculated to maintain a percentage split value for each subsequent node of the substitute level tree that is equal to the percentage split value in each corresponding subsequent node of the base level population segmentation tree.

10.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

11.   (Original) A system according to claim 10, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

12.   (Original) A system according to claim 10, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

13.   (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 9, wherein up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

14.   (Canceled)

15.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, wherein the split values are for income and age.

16.   (Original) A system according to claim 9, further including means for verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

17.   (Currently Amended) A software system to execute on a computer system for segmenting a population, comprising:
    a base segmentation tree defining module for defining a base level population segmentation tree associated with a base level data set at a first top level node having a base precision;
    an alternative level variable defining module for defining a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternative level data set at a second top level node having an alternative precision different than the base level data set and useable as substitutes in the subsequent nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision different from the base precision; and
    a substitute split value determining module for determining substitute split values for each subsequent node of the tree based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternative level data set at the second top level node to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision, the substitute split value determining module to calculate the substitute split values that maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base segmentation tree.

18.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, further including determining whether a level shift is required.

19.   (Original) A software system according to claim 18, further including determining segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

20.   (Original) A software system according to claim 18, further including determining segments using another level when a level shift is required.

21.   (Previously Presented) A software system according to claim 17, wherein up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision comprises determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

22.   (Canceled)

23.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, wherein the split values are for income and age.

24.   (Original) A software system according to claim 17, further including a module for verifying the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

25.   (Currently Amended) A machine accessible medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause a machine to:

define a base level population segmentation tree associated with a base level data set at a first top level node having a base precision;

define a set of alternative level variables associated with an alternative level data set at a second top level node having an alternative precision different than the base level data set and useable as substitutes in the nodes of the base level population segmentation tree to create a substitute level tree having a substitute precision; and

determine substitute split values for each subsequent node of the tree based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternative level data set at the second top level node to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision by calculating the substitute split values to maintain a percentage split value of the substitute level tree that is equal to a percentage split value of the base level population segmentation tree.

26.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine whether a level shift is required.

27.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 26 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine segments using the base level tree when no level shift is required.

28.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 26 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to determine segments using another level when a level shift is required.

29.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to enable up and down shifting between levels of the base precision and the substitute precision by determining at least one segment using the substitute level tree.

30.   (Canceled)

31.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25, wherein the split values are for income and age.

32.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25 having instructions stored thereon that, when executed, cause the machine to verify the results of a segment determination when using substitute values.

33.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

34.   (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 9, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

35.   (Previously Presented) A software system according to claim 17, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

36.   (Previously Presented) A machine accessible medium as defined in claim 25, wherein the base level population segmentation tree is based on at least one of demographic data or behavioral data for a set of consumers.

37.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method to segment a population comprising:

receiving, in a ~~computer system~~ base segmentation tree defining module, a base level data set <u>at a first top level node</u> having a first precision;

defining a first segmentation tree in accordance with the base level data set, the first segmentation tree comprising a plurality of base level variables, each variable associated with a base level <u>sub-</u>node <u>subsequent to the first top level node</u> and having a corresponding base level value;

receiving, in ~~the computer system~~ <u>a substitute split value determining module</u>, an alternate data set <u>at a second top level node</u> having a second precision different from the first precision of the base level data set;

defining a plurality of alternate level variables<u> based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternate level data set at the second top level node</u>, each alternate level variable associated with an alternate level <u>sub-</u>node <u>subsequent to the second top level node</u> and having a corresponding alternate level value to facilitate at least one of upshifting or downshifting relative to the base level data set; and

defining a second segmentation tree in accordance with the alternate data set, the second segmentation tree comprising the plurality of alternate level variables and corresponding alternate level values representative of the population.

38.   (Canceled)

39.   (Currently Amended) A method as defined in claim 37, wherein defining the plurality of alternate level variables further comprises calculating the corresponding alternate level value to maintain a similar percentage split between the base level <u>sub-</u>node and the alternate level <u>sub-</u>node.

40.   (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method to segment a population comprising:

receiving, in a ~~computer system~~ base segmentation tree defining module, a base level data set at a first top level node having a first precision;

defining a segmentation tree in accordance with the base level data set, the segmentation tree having a plurality of decision sub-nodes subsequent to the first top level node, each comprising a base level variable and a base level value;

calculating a percentage split for each of the plurality of decision sub-nodes of the segmentation tree, wherein the percentage split is calculated at the corresponding base level value for the corresponding base level variable;

receiving, in ~~the computer system~~ a substitute split value determining module, an alternate level data set at a second top level node having a second precision;

selecting an alternate level variable from the alternate level data set for each of the plurality of decision sub-nodes of the segmentation tree, ~~the alternate level variable selected in association with a relative similarity to the base level variable~~;

calculating an alternate level value of the alternate level variable for each of the plurality of decision sub-nodes, where the alternate level value is calculated to maintain the percentage split for each of the plurality of corresponding decision sub-nodes and;

outputting an alternate level segmentation tree based on the base level data set at the first top level node and the alternate level data set at the second top level node, the alternate level segmentation tree representative of the population associated with the alternate level data set.

41.   (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 40, further comprising upshifting from the base level data set to the alternate level data set when the alternate level data set is more precise than the base level data set.

42.   (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 40, further comprising downshifting from the base level data set to the alternate level data set when the alternate level data set is less precise than the base level data set.